

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

THE Tarheel Washoff



SOIL EROSION SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NORTH CAROLINA AREA

5117-10-5
Circular No. 5

HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA

December 15, 1934

Special Erosion Bulletin Well Received

"Thank you very much for your bulletin on Soil Erosion. ... There is no doubt that we have a great work to do in this matter and it is the sort of work that will pay big dividends." --Hon. J.W. Bailey, United States Senator, Raleigh, N.C.

"The special handbook that the staff of the Deep River (N.C.) project recently got out with the cooperation of the county agents and commissioners of the three counties in which the erosion project is located is a master stroke."--Dr. N.E. Winters, regional director, Oklahoma area.

Commissioners of Anson, Union and Chesterfield counties of the Brown Creek project have agreed to finance the printing of 2,000 similar handbooks for the use of landowners of that section.

Also, the supervisors of Pittsylvania county, Virginia, have agreed to issue 2500 copies of the handbook, revised to meet the conditions there, to farmers of the Banister River project.

3,000 Additional Copies At High Point

So great has been the demand for the 32-page treatise of the Soil Erosion Service work that a reprint of 3,000 copies of the Deep River and Reedy Fork bulletin was recently made.

Growing Erosion-Conscious

FROM EVERY QUARTER we understand that the erosion control program fostered by the government is being received wholeheartedly by forward-looking citizens on all sides. Leading farmers and civic leaders pronounce the effort as very fundamental -- as something they have wanted to do all along but were unable to accomplish effectively alone.

"STOP THAT WASH!" is becoming the present-day slogan of the farmer; not only of the farmer, but also of the banker who lends money to the farmer on the strength of prospective crop returns -- teachers, preachers, state officials, garden clubs, civic clubs, newspapers, all are taking it up.

Honest Confession Good For...

"I WAS AT FIRST adversely inclined toward the Soil Erosion Service along with a great number of my neighbors. I'm sorry. It was just a plain case of ignorance. We failed to understand the nature of the movement.

"BUT FINALLY MY ATTENTION WAS ATTRACTED to some of the work being done by the specialists on Rober Dean's place near me. I pride myself in feeling that I know a good thing when I see it.

"THAT EXCELLENT WORK I SAW made me sit up and take notice. It made me eager to get such work done on my place. I am now cooperating fully with the movement. The system of terracing that is being used on my farm is all right. The same holds true, I am finding, with everything else the government is doing to help me to prevent my land from washing away."--J.S. Blackburn, Rt. 1 Kernersville.

"A SERVICE MORE ESSENTIAL to America's fundamental industry can hardly be imagined. Some 35,000,000 acres of land formerly cultivated have been ruined by uncontrolled erosion, land which, if it had been saved, would be worth nearly two billion dollars. ...

"STRANGE, IS IT NOT, that while we have spent vast sums of money for fertilizing the soil and for research and experiment in making it more productive, we have done little, until now, to save the soil itself? But at last this all-important work has begun in earnest and effectively. It means a new day of security and prosperity in the country. ..."

--Editorial in The Atlanta Journal.

Man Way Out West Writes In

"HAVE BEEN READING YOUR CIRCULARS very carefully and am very much interested in your work. I would appreciate very much if you would inform me under what obligations I would be, what would be required of me for you to render the service to my farm. I now have a renter on the farm and as you know I am not there, but am very much interested in the work.

"PLEASE INFORM ME just how I would secure this service and accept my sincerest thanks."

--R. C. Murrow
Beaver Washington.

County Agent Encourages Move

"THAT THE EROSION CONTROL WORK is of vital importance certainly cannot be questioned when we realize that all soil building or improvement starts with the conservation of the soil which we have. Certainly we cannot hope to improve it as long as we allow it to go off faster each year than it took nature 200 to 400 years to build.

"TO SHOW THE SPREADING INTEREST in the work in this county, more than 15,000 acres have been signed up, and petitions sent to Washington, asking that this work be started on Carraway creek. Also, petitions have been forwarded to Washington totaling more than 20,000 acres, asking for the Deep River area to be extended on to Ramseur.

"THIS, I FEEL, shows the appreciation of Randolph farmers to the importance of this work, and the effort of those outside the project to get their land included in the area demonstrates clearly that they are awake to the importance of a better means of water control."

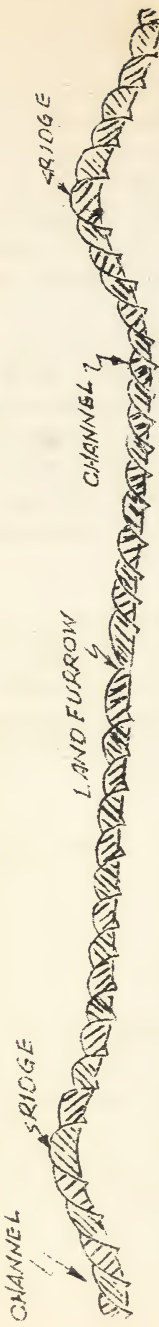
--E.S. Millsaps, County Agent,
Randolph County.

Lespedeza Survives Drought

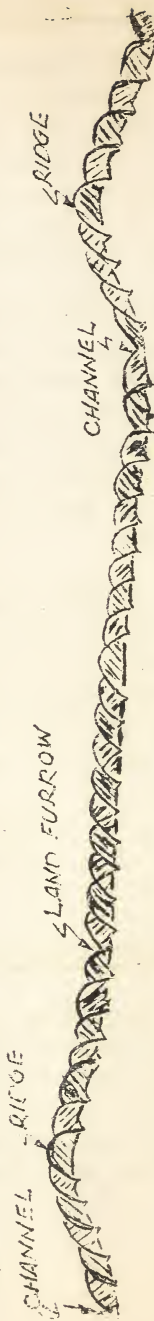
Korean lespedeza with some sweet clover on lined fields was the only pasture or forage crop in the middle west to withstand the severe drought of last summer, according to a report received from the government's Soil Erosion Service station at Urbana, Illinois.

BREAKING TERRACED LAND

The proper maintenance of broad base terraces is greatly simplified by using the proper method in breaking the land.



No. 1--Start the list on top of the terrace ridge, turning the dirt to the ridge from both directions. After the entire terrace has been plowed in this way the strip between each two succeeding terraces may be plowed as a separate land, with the final furrow coming approximately halfway between terraces. The exact location of this final furrow may be varied by listing more or less to one terrace than to the other.



No. 2--After the entire terrace has been plowed as in No. 1 with the last upper-side furrow in the bottom of the channel, start another list 8 to 10 feet above the channel and throw dirt up hill until the bottom of the channel is reached. Plow out the remaining strip as a separate land. This method will have a tendency to keep the channel open as well as the ridge up. With either No. 1 or No. 2 methods it is usually best to brush out the channel with a light drag or grader after the plowing has been completed.

Soil Survey Important

WHILE MAKING A SOIL SURVEY, W. D. Lee, chief soil expert, was questioned by a landowner who doubted the value of such work.

HAVING FOUND THAT THE SOILS of that farm were a heavy clay loam, Mr. Lee asked the farmer why he had chosen that particular type of soil on which to farm.

"I DIDN'T CHOOSE IT," replied the farmer. "This location and the improvements and the price suited me and I bought it. I just supposed the soil to be about the same as I farmed where I was raised. They look alike and the same kinds of crops are grown. However, I do admit that I have since found that this land does have to be plowed differently. It can't be cultivated at all when wet. The hillsides wash mighty bad, and clover doesn't seem to do nearly so well as where I came from. The land, really, is not just the kind I thought I was buying and was used to farming."

DOUBTLESS THIS INSTANCE of being unfamiliar with the slight differences of the two soil types cost the farmer more than he would admit. A survey of his soil would have helped him out materially. In fact, a soil survey can easily mean the difference between the farmer's success and failure.

EXPERIMENTS PROVE that a 7-inch layer of surface soil on an 8-percent slope will be completely washed away within a lifetime when grown to a cultivated crop. A 3-year rotation will keep this surface soil in place for approximately 150 years, while alfalfa checks washoff indefinitely.

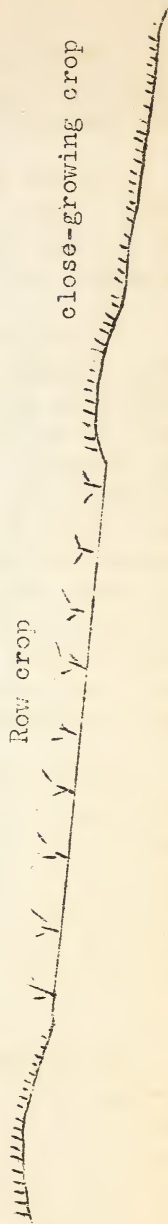
Effectiveness of Strip-Cropping -- Texas Test



Not terraced, not strip-cropped...Washoff 55 tons an acre a year.



Terraced, not strip-cropped...Washoff 5 tons an acre a year.



Row crop

close-growing crop

Terraced and strip-cropped...Washoff 1 1/3 ton an acre a year.

Banker Urges Cooperation

"THE PROJECTS BEING PUT FORTH by the federal government to conserve the farmer's lands before they are entirely destroyed by erosion are wholly worth while and when the farmer applies for a loan from the bank, if the banker would consider the application based upon how much cooperation the farmer was giving the federal government in saving his lands from ruin by rainwash every one concerned would be benefitted.

"MY EXPERIENCE OVER MORE THAN 50 YEARS dealing with farmers and engaging in farming myself has taught me that lands improperly cultivated and allowed to erode soon cease to be an asset but become a direct liability.

"IF THE PRESENT SYSTEM continues of allowing our lands, especially in this Piedmont section, to wash the topsoil away after ever rain, it will be only a question of time when they will not be worth the taxes. The federal government, as shown by its very actions, stands ready to do everything within its power to assist the farmer and has a right to obtain cooperation 100 percent."

--T.L. Johnston
Rock Hill, S.C.

ROW CROPS grown on sloping land promote dangerous soil-washing. Any row crop which is cultivated a number of times should be handled with caution. The way to help prevent great soil loss when row crops are used is to sow them in rotation with close-growing crops on the contour.

"We Will All Be Gone to the D."

"Gov Land Erosion Service

"If you remember I signed. Was the first man signed in this township. I havent sowed a grain. I always sow all the land in rye. 30 bu. and then it darned near washes away. Many yrs ago I advocated terracing. Tis the nicest thing the Gov has done or ever will. We have some Fools and always will. Superstitious as to the Hold the Gov might get. I want to know when you can come. Had I better go ahead with my rye. I wanted it terrace first. I want all my old land put to small grain and grass. Just enough to grow my Tobacco Cotton Truck and Corn. I hope to get enough cleared this winter for that so I can sow it all to Lespedeza. I cant stand Erosion. Come on down here and lets get together and make a Demonstration out of my place. I am not afraid of the Gov. I know if there isnt something done soon We will all be gone to the D. The land is about gone. I will take all the seed lime I can get.

"I was ask how I kept my land from washing away. I said what little is left was saved by $1\frac{1}{2}$ bu rye to the acre a 2 in bull tongue & a det mule each year.

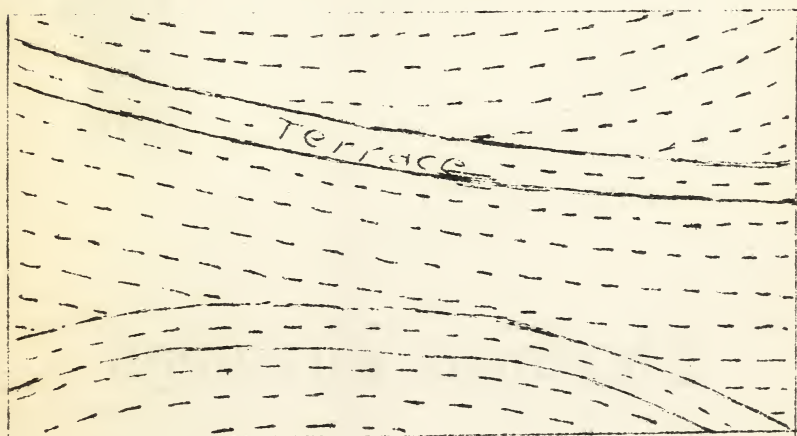
"And of course I Fertilize the rye. Let me hear from you men. I have only 60 a. $\frac{1}{2}$ cleared. If you can help me get it seeded and started up I can clear for my other crops."

--Letter from Deep River Cooperator.

Contour Cultivation

ONE OF THE SIMPLEST and least expensive preventatives of erosion is contour cultivation. No matter what is done to prevent soilwash, whether it be strip-cropping or terracing, tillage must be made a part of the scheme. Sloping land should never be cultivated with the slope, but always across it, in order to reduce runoff and washoff. Rows on the contour serve as miniature terraces.

THE BEST PRACTICE being followed by farmers is to start the first row along the top of the terrace ridge and to continue them downhill parallel to the terrace until the next terrace channel below is reached, ending all point or short rows in the terrace channel (see below). Then beginning atop this terrace the operation is repeated. In this way all point rows terminate in the terrace channel. This permits the channel to be kept open and to be used as a turnrow.





Christmas Greetings